IPPOLITO D'ESTE

Ippolito d'Este and Alessandro Farnese were the last of the great Renaissance cardinals. D'Este was born in 1509, the son of Alfonso I d'Este, the third duke of Ferrara and Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Pope Alexander VI. Not being the eldest, he was unable to succeed his father as duke, and, as was often the case for younger sons, he was launched on an ecclesiastical career.

By the time he was ten years old, he had succeeded his uncle Ippolito I as archbishop of Milan and at the age of twenty-seven he was sent to the court of Francis I in France as ambassador of the d'Este family. At twenty-nine he was made a cardinal. Although his educational and cultural background was rooted in the highly-refined Ferrarese court, renowned as one of Italy's great political and cultural centers, the thirteen years he spent in France served to deepen his love of art and start him out in his career as patron of artists and writers. He commissioned the famous names of his day: Benvenuto Cellini, the goldsmith, turned out tiny masterpieces for his table and magni-